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ABSTRACT

Presented is a collection of case studies by therapists, educators, artists, parents, and recreation leaders, dealing with the arts as learning experiences for handicapped children. Each of the ten articles records the positive effects of arts experiences (dance, art, music, drama) on the growth and development of a particular handicapped child or group of children. (BD)

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ARTS FOR THE HANDICAPPED CHILD

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INTRODUCTION

A MESSAGE

Throughout the past year, The National Committee, Arts for the Handicapped has communicated a single message to many thousands of teachers, parents, administrators and artists in each of the fifty states: The arts are powerful vehicles for enhancing learning and enriching living for all handicapped children. This thought reaffirms a conviction that, "Words and music, colour and movement can extend human experience in a way that words alone cannot do."*

Many respond by asking, "Why the arts?" "What makes the arts different?" "Can a classroom teacher use the arts?" "Where are the arts helping handicapped children to grow and change?"

This collection of case studies by therapists, educators, artists, parents and recreation leaders is our response to these queries. Each article is a personal, descriptive essay recording the positive effects of arts experiences on the growth and development of a particular handicapped child or group of handicapped children. We hope these narratives will encourage and inspire many more people to explore dance, drama, music and art activities with children who have special needs.

The National Committee expresses its gratitude to the authors of "Arts for the Handicapped Child - Why?" for their dedication, commitment and continuing efforts to assist in the growth of creative arts programs for all children with handicapping conditions. The initial inspiration and direction for the manuscript is credited to Richard Cortright, National Education Association and William Schipper, Associate Director, National Association State Directors of Special Education. Both of these men were founding members of the National Committee, Arts for the Handicapped Board of Directors. Special appreciation is also extended to NCAH Model Site, the Clover Park School District, Tacoma, Washington, for its guidance and support in publishing this document.

*Clark, Kenneth, Civilization, Harper & Row

It would greatly reward the efforts of these people to know that this book has inspired readers to enjoy sharing a special creative experience with a handicapped child.

Wendy Perks
Executive Director
The National Committee, Arts
for the Handicapped

Louise Appell
Associate Director
The National Committee, Arts
for the Handicapped

DANCE



Ann Riordan is the chairwoman for the National Dance Association Program for the Handicapped and a member of the National Committee, Arts for the Handicapped Board of Directors. She is an instructor in the Department of Modern Dance at the University of Utah. She resides in Salt Lake City with her husband and three children.

DANCE WITH PERFORMANCE FOR THE HANDICAPPED

Ann Riordan

There are many people like myself who are involved on many different levels in working with the handicapped person. From my experience in talking with them, we seem to share a common means to fulfillment--the need to be with our students, to share with them a joint happiness in accomplishment. It's like singing in a glorious chorus...all voices blending to reach the highest note possible. I feel that way when I dance with my students.

My experiences with creative movement activities for the handicapped person began about ten years ago when I was teaching in the classroom. I was a special education teacher with a background in dance. A natural result was to put the two together and this combination of dance and special education uncovered a whole new world of movement experience for me and my students. Five years ago, I joined the faculty of the Department of Ballet and Modern Dance at the University of Utah but couldn't give up my interest and love for the handicapped person. I began teaching dance at the Work Activity Center for Handicapped Adults in Salt Lake City, Utah. The center made arrangements to bus my students to a large gymnasium across town so we would have enough space. I agreed to work with all the students that were interested. This turned out to be 30-45 mentally retarded individuals and approximately 12 individuals confined to wheelchairs. The ages ranged from 21-50 years old. The range of handicap, on a trainable level, includes Downs Syndrome, cerebral palsy (various degrees), other forms of brain damage and retardation, and various levels of emotional problems.

I was reluctant at first to work with adults because all my previous work had been with the age group 6-21. I feared their rate of failure would be very high by that time, producing negative self concepts which I felt would reduce the chance of change to a minimal level. After the first day, however, it really didn't matter! Their enthusiasm for movement was overwhelming. They excited me as I excited them, and we found a mutual exchange of caring and sharing through movement experiences.

I assumed nothing. We would go as far as we could with no limit in sight. I felt I could try anything dealing with dance; I could use all my accumulated knowledge and experience that I had learned as a student of dance, as a teacher of dance and as a teacher of the handicapped person. If I failed, I would simply change direction or come to it from a different perspective.

What has happened as a result of those rough beginnings has been far beyond my initial expectations. From this basic beginning, there developed a performing group of 12 students. These students have the stage presence, creative personality, repertory and aesthetic qualities found in many modern dance companies. When talking to them about stage presence, I discussed my excitement in watching how they moved; I was their audience. I reflected back to them in a positive manner what I saw both verbally and non-verbally through gesture and drama. My energy was always high in order to amplify their experience.

In all of their performances, these dancers had an incredible charisma which seemed to warm their audience and involve that audience in the dance experience. Each time the group performed, members of the audience approached me after the performance reporting how deeply they had been touched by the performance. I can't fully explain this phenomenon, but one possible explanation has occurred to me. The retarded individual is limited in verbal expression of feeling, but when they are allowed to develop a mode of expression which is non-verbal, they seem to tap into pure, undiluted emotions. The intensity of their experiences may be one reason for the intense involvement experienced by their audiences.

Starting a group as I did seems overwhelming at first, but I started at the beginning with the basics of movement just as I would start any beginning group, whether normal or retarded. My philosophy stays the same, but my teaching techniques have been modified.

I always start in a circle to reduce awareness of outside stimuli. We usually begin on the floor (to eliminate balance problems) and work with non-locomotor movements such as bending, stretching, twisting, rotating, swinging, and other simple movements. We then move on to standing and work on locomotor movements such as walking, running, jumping, rolling, turning and skipping. This standing work will also begin to use the space around them and the space their body occupies. As they become aware of that space, attention can be focused on awareness of body parts. Many concepts can begin in this standing circle such as starts and stops, fast and slow, unison and opposition, high and low, small and large. We then work on presence and performance stemming from presentation of self. It may seem strange to begin a focus on performance so early in the program, but I have found that this focus on presenting their "best selves" through movement from the very beginning seems to enhance a positive self concept. We do this through walking with good posture which continues into concepts of space and moving through space (such as across the circle) at various tempos in different directions such as forward and back, stopping, and avoiding contact with other participants.

After two years of building a vocabulary of movement for each student, each finding his or her own way of moving the body through space, I introduced improvisation. I wasn't sure what the results would be, and I was prepared for failure. But to my surprise, that didn't happen. I started with shape and found this to be the best avenue of approach to improvisation for these people. Shape was an aspect of movement they could see and feel. We included both shaping of their own bodies and shaping around other bodies. We then proceeded to moving through space: arms, legs, head, torso, moving and shaping, then stopping, going to the floor, jumping, swinging, over and under. As the class activities continued, they seemed to take a direction of their own. It was

necessary for me to be open to the spontaneous developments of each class in order to make the most of each class. Moreover, this frequently allowed much greater growth than I had originally thought possible.

Out of these improvisation experiences grew the movement repertoire which we used in our performances. Because the movements used in performance "belonged" to the students, and they know that they had an important role in making the dances, the performances had an authenticity which was truly moving. Everywhere we performed, the applause was enthusiastic and genuine. Audiences became involved with us and wanted to share our joy of moving. Their involvement was infectious. Dancers and audience were encouraged to enjoy an aesthetic experience together!

The reader may ask what happened to the students over these last few years. Nothing has been tested; but from my observations, the observations of my dance colleagues, the students' parents, the staff, and the faculty at the Work Activity Center, these people seem to have changed. They seem proud of their group, feel beautiful, and have something unique to give to someone else. They can create dances and relate through movement to each other. They can control their own bodies--they can dance!

As I look over these past few years, I can see now that the turning point for them and for me from simple exercises to the aesthetic experience came when I took the performing group to an advanced technique modern dance class and dress rehearsal of a concert in my department at the University of Utah. (This was done several times over a period of a few months.) One student said to me when I came to a session, "Look, Annie, I am a dancer." The beautiful part of it was that she was, in the fullest sense of the term.

Lillian C. Resnick, artist teacher and art therapist, received her B.F.A. from Cooper Union and her M.S.Ed. from Queens College. Experienced in teaching art and working as an art therapist with handicapped individuals, she is currently Coordinator of the Arts Program and art therapist at Sara's Center, Great Neck, New York. Patricia Bardi is a dancer, teacher and movement therapist. She has had extensive training in creative movement potential and her professional experience has included the development of adolescent recreational programs in community centers. She is currently Coordinator of the Dance Program and movement therapist at Sara's Center, Great Neck, New York. Sara's Center is a Special Project of the National Committee, Arts for the Handicapped.

ART AND MOVEMENT AT SARA'S CENTER

Lillian C. Resnick

Peter is a dark haired eleven year old retarded boy, rather tall and sturdy looking, whose speech is perseverative and who moves in an awkward, uncoordinated manner. He was referred to us two years ago because of his multiple handicaps. His neurological impairments resulted in inadequate visuo-motor discrimination, poor body concept and undeveloped gross and fine motor coordination. His self esteem was very low and he lacked self-confidence. His emotional problems were reflected in belligerent and inappropriate behavior. Peter's response to his peers was suspicious and defensive, making it impossible to establish a meaningful relationship. His poor social skills were a barrier to communication with others.

ART SESSION

Materials in the art room were basic and simple: crayons, magic markers, tempera paint, clay and collage material were available. To minimize distractions, supplies on the work table were limited to one or two media at each session.

A non-directive approach was used at the beginning to allow Peter to proceed at his own rate. Peter's early work reflected a lag in development and he needed the freedom and time to experiment and play with art materials. Peter's first paintings consisted of large globs of color, mostly in greys and blacks, his crayon drawings were amorphous shapes and scribbles and his clay pieces were crude, formless masses. Although his work appeared regressive and meaningless, each production represented a mood, object or idea which Peter was encouraged to talk about. Art, then, also became a means through which Peter was learning to express himself verbally.

Peter frequently used clay as a medium through which he expressed his hostility. Pounding, beating and poking the clay often gave way to constructing an object which he then worked on with care and concentration. In this type of episode Peter needed continuous support, guidance and assistance in transforming a cathartic experience into a creative one.

In working with Peter the focus has been on the immediate experience of how he feels and what his present memories and associations are. More recently his art has been showing greater interest in placement or design, in form discrimination and color. When regressive or perseverative patterns appear, a change of media, limiting paint to one or two colors, or presenting a frame within which to draw, often diverts this tendency. A line around the edge of a picture, a large circle, a long sheet of paper on which Peter could draw, often provides enough structure to help him focus his attention and express himself with clarity.

Peter has participated in group projects such as mural making. Themes for murals evolved from group discussion. Rules for working together had to be discussed in advance and agreed upon by everyone. This activity promoted peer interaction and in this process Peter has been learning to listen to others and work cooperatively in a group venture.

MOVEMENT SESSION

Materials were made easily accessible in the room for creating environments. These raw materials included blocks, chairs, multi-sized cardboard boxes, fabrics, floor mats, colorful scarves, costumes, wigs, masks, pillows, stuffed animals or any variety of colorful, stimulating objects. The group of children were invited to help the movement therapist build a model structure in which suggestions were given for creating houses, forts, caves, secret dens or any structure that the children could imagine creating. The process would begin and, slowly, as the model was built, the story and characters inhabiting the environment would begin to evolve. Decision-making and cooperation were stressed for the construction of a house/fort, enhancing the expression of each child's ideas and also working with others toward

a common goal. Through this process they began to stimulate each other in their creative ideas while making their own characters increasingly alive and moving. Peter developed an ability to participate with spontaneity and imagination. He could think of himself as one of his favorite fantasy figures, i.e., Batman, and create a story for this character. A bridge in his isolation was formed, allowing him to experience the vitality of his imagination and to interact with the other characters in the room.

Peter displayed a high level of distrust and suspicion which needed to be externalized and experienced before he could initiate contact with his peers. A long sheet of material was sewn in a tube-like fashion and used in a variety of situations for the child to explore his own personal boundaries and body size. Peter was challenged to use this material as a dark, narrow tunnel to crawl through. In the initial stages, he was only capable of going half way through the tunnel before experiencing a high degree of fear and calling out, "Get me out of here!". The group would respond immediately, making this a positive experience for Peter by receiving help and support for returning to the open space. He could challenge himself further in subsequent movement sessions and eventually moved through the tunnel, end to end, with a real sense of overcoming his fear. This opened up areas for relating to the other children in which Peter could lend and give support to others also trying to squeeze through the enclosed space.

Peter's ability to cope with frustration was very low, using tantrums, spitting, and abusive language toward others whenever he could not understand or complete a task. Paper bags were used to release and express this hostility. The bags were twisted and shaped into bendable, harmless swords. The rules for using these swords had to be explicit and understood before any child was allowed a fencing match. Peter knew he could shout "Stop" if the mock fighting became too threatening and announce "Go" when he renewed his strength to continue the game. This was a very successful way for Peter to channel his anger and begin to develop a sense of control in the expression of his emotions.

CONCLUSION

According to the observation of the therapists, parents and teachers, Peter has shown considerable growth and development in his cognitive, perceptual motor and social skills. Peter's attention span has increased so he no longer spends excessive amounts of time staring vacantly into space or fluctuating from activity to activity. He remains focused for most of the movement session and follows instructions more clearly. He performs movement tasks more proficiently with a keener spatial awareness and sense of body control. Peter's art has been changing from regressive, primitive expression to one that is more integrated and creative. The content of his pictures is more diverse and his spontaneous comments about his work indicates that he is observing and interpreting his experience with greater sensitivity and response.

Teacher observations indicate that Peter has made academic and social progress in the past two years and his verbal skills have also improved. He can now enter into peer group organized games during recess, whereas, just a few months ago, he could function only in a self-contained situation. Although he does most of his work in a special education class, this year Peter has been mainstreaming in several regular classes at his grade level. Peter has moved from stereotypic and perseverative type of involvement with others to a more personal interaction. He shows increasing growth in his ability to control belligerent behavior and willingness to learn alternative modes of dealing with problems.

Art and dance have contributed to Peter's ability to interact and communicate with his peers, giving him a wider range of inner resources and skills to share and enjoy with others.

Alice Ball is a Registered Music Therapist
and Director of Performing Arts for the Alan
Short Center, an NCAH Model Site, in
Stockton, California.

TO DANCE IS TO GROW

Alice Ball

Dance is an art: an art through which meaningful expression can occur. Dance can be a leap for joy, a series of clearly defined steps set to music, a religious ritual, or a means of self-expression. People dance socially. They dance for exercise. They dance to entertain. They dance to communicate their deepest feelings.

It is this last reason for dancing that I am concerned with in using Creative Dance with developmentally disabled adults at the Alan Short Center * Arts for the Handicapped. The Alan Short Center offers advanced, specialized training in the visual and performing arts to individuals with learning disabilities, retardation, and/or physical handicaps as a means of helping them improve their quality and experience in living. As a Registered Music Therapist and Director of Performing Arts for the Center, I am involved in using music, dance and drama as tools to aid each student in his individual development. Involving my students in Creative Dance has proven to be a particularly positive, rewarding opportunity to teach them personal expression and meaningful social interaction.

I have three basic goals in teaching Creative Dance: (a) to teach the elements of dance (i.e., the body, space, time, and force); (b) to structure the teaching so my students can experiment and grow; and (3) to lead each student to the creative uses of the elements of dance. Each of my lesson plans is designed to: (a) present an element of dance; (b) give the students an opportunity to experiment with that element; and (c) require the students to use that element in simple form. For each of my students, I pinpoint their specific skill deficits and needs. I then use dance and music as tools in eliminating these needs, such as rigidity of movement; lack of self esteem, lack of self confidence; inability to express their inner thoughts, feelings, or ideas; short attention span; and lack of self awareness, awareness of others, awareness of environment.

IMITATION

Students need to learn how to move; what to move; how long to move; and when to move. Therefore, by having them imitate ME, I can show them what different body parts they can move and the different ways they can move them. They develop a repertoire of movement patterns and possibilities.

GUIDED EXPLORATION

Expanding the movements learned through imitation, I isolate each particular body part and have them investigate all the different ways they might use it through dance. Each individual student is asked to create his own unique movement (arm, leg, etc.). I sometimes make suggestions as to movement the students did not explore and ask them to try these variations.

DISCOVERY

Students are then introduced to movement concepts--stretching and bending, twisting, bouncing, swinging, shaking--and are asked to discover the various ways they can employ these concepts. The imitation, guided exploration and discovery sequences are all combined with lively, rhythmic music.

EXPERIMENTATION

Once the student develops his repertoire of movement patterns, he is asked to experiment with them, adapting his movements to the tempo, dynamics, and mood of the music. First, discussions are held as to the types of movements that the students might use for each particular piece of music; e.g. if the group decides the music is fast, loud and happy, the students offer ideas of possible appropriate movement patterns. The music is then played for each student individually and they select their own unique sequence of movements from the possibilities suggested in the discussion.

COMPOSITION

As the culmination of his Interpretive Dance experience, each student is asked to design his own unique dance. His creation is to be a pattern of movements he himself has chosen in response to the tempo, dynamics, and mood of his own musical selection. I have noted specific changes in the social behavior, psychological development, and physical skills of several of my students since they have been involved with Creative Dance. One of my students has increased the amount of time he participates in Dance class without wandering off or making irrelevant statements from 30 minutes to 60 minutes each session. Another student has increased the amount of time he can balance himself and dance without support from walls or furniture from one to three minutes. Another student has learned to keep his eyes on each of his peers as they are dancing, rather than keeping his eyes on the floor. Finally, dance has proved to be a unifying force among the students. Each student has learned to show respect and attention to every other student's dancing and accept it as their personal expression. They have learned not to talk during another's dance, not to criticize, condemn, or find fault with another student's dancing, and to reinforce each other with verbal praise, cheers, and applause.

The advantage, then, of using Creative Dance as a tool in working with developmentally disabled adults is that dance can communicate and teach in a non-threatening, enjoyable, and creative manner. Dance thus is potentially capable of eliminating some specific needs of handicapped individuals and their fear of self-expression.

Resources

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ART

Mrs. Ruth Stamm is the mother of three. She lives with her husband and son Andrew in Seattle, Washington. This statement was sent as a personal letter to Wendy Perks, Executive Director, National Committee, Arts for the Handicapped.

My name is Ruth Stamm, and I am Andrew Stamm's mother. I am 52 years old, and have been married to Andrew's father, Stanley, for 32 years. Along with Andrew, we have two married daughters, Pamela and Leslie. I have never worked outside our home.

Andrew Stamm was 20 years old last November 23rd. For the past 3 years he has been attending two schools. One is Pacific Public School, which serves mentally handicapped young people between the ages of 12 and 21. The other has been Cornish School of Allied Arts up til last June, and now he is at the Factory of Visual Arts art school.

At Pacific School, Andy's artistic endeavors have been recognized and he has a sculpting class and an art class. At Cornish School, under his teacher, Beth Cook, and now at the Factory of Visual Arts, under Kevin Cuddy, he is allowed to express himself artistically in oils on canvas.

An early diagnosis of Andrew was made of autism with a severe language disability. By the time he was nine years old he still had no language. At this time he was enrolled in a private school for special children called Leguin School, and a wonderfully gifted teacher, by the name of Lynn Mink, began a 3 year program of tutoring him. Mrs. Mink knew that he had started to draw, paint, and make clay figures around the age of four. She decided to utilize this to aid in the development of Andrew's verbal expression. Knowing that he would not respond to questioning, she asked him to draw certain figures instead. Eventually, Andrew started telling Mrs. Mink what he had drawn. As his self-confidence developed, he would tell her what he was going to draw BEFORE he drew it. This was Andrew's break-through to the world of verbal communication.

By the end of his first five months at Seguin School, Andrew could count and say the alphabet. His verbal I.Q. had risen from 55 to 65, his performance I.Q. from 86 to 107, and his full scale I.Q. from 67 to 83. These giant strides led to his case history being written up by Lynn Mink in the textbook Learning Disorders, Volume II, 1966, his chapter, "A Fortunate Synthesis in the Case of Andy".

When Andrew turned, 12 he was able to attend special education classes at John Marshall Jr. High Public School. He was fortunate to have an outstanding art teacher, Jane Bryant, who recognized his abilities and fostered them so that he grew in his techniques and discipline.

Andrew has run and won the one mile race in the Washington State Special Olympics for the past three years (1974-1976). He is a strong swimmer, he hikes, and he goes on long bike trips. He does gardening and yard work to earn money. For the past two years a special display of Andrew's art work has been featured at Washington State's "Very Special Arts Fair". Last spring he demonstrated his sculpturing technique at the "Arts for the Handicapped" show. Other showings of Andrew's work include the Seattle Center Arts Fair (two years), the Seattle Public Schools High Schools Art Show, Pacific School, Cornish School of Allied Arts, and a one man show at the First Federal Savings Bank in Stanwood, Washington in the summer of 1975. There are over 200 paintings by Andrew, framed and hanging.

What has art been for Andrew? It originally helped his teachers and family to open the doors of his mind. Now he can read, write, compose letters, and do mathematics. Art has given him self-confidence. It's been his means of acceptance into the "normal" world---his means of expression. According to Jim McConnell, Principal of Pacific School, Andrew has been forced through his art to open up, to interact and to react. Mainly, it's been the one thing he does exceptionally well, and because of that, it's been a stabilizing factor that demands that he give of himself. As Mrs. Mink stated eleven years ago, "the most important aid to Andrew's verbal expression has proven to be his own drawings".

Bruce Klein is a practicing artist working as an Assistant Director of Creative Growth in Oakland, California. Creative Growth is a Special Project of National Committee, Arts for the Handicapped.

MARY: A CASE STUDY

Bruce Klein

Mary stands trembling. She will not move from the door. She clings to a ledge next door, and I must bring a table and chair to her. Slowly I introduce her to Creative Growth. In six months the staff of Creative Growth will see more changes in Mary than in any other client.

Creative Growth is a community arts program. I am a practicing artist working as its Assistant Director. We work with all handicapped persons: developmentally disabled, physically handicapped, blind, deaf and mentally ill. Our youngest clients are sixteen; our oldest sixty-five. The majority are retarded with emotional problems overlying their retardation.

Our artists work in groups around tables. They paint in tempera on inexpensive paper. Some use watercolors, acrylics or pens. All paint what they wish. We encourage their struggle to find their inner voice. We believe that all people, no matter how handicapped, can gain strength, enjoyment and self-fulfillment through art. Mary is a paradigm of someone who changed so dramatically in such a short time as to almost completely reverse our common sense notions about the profoundly retarded.

We knew little about Mary's background. She was institutionalized at 6 months of age. She has no other programs. At her caretaker's she gets little social stimulation, TV at best.

When she came through our front door, she was trembling. She would not move nor speak. She would not hang up her coat or sit anywhere near other clients. She urinated on herself. I first saw her from across the room. When any teacher came near, she pulled away. I thought: if she will not come to Creative Growth, then we must bring creative growth to her. I brought a table and chair to her. I sat beside her saying her name again and again,

"Mar-ee, Mar-ee", as if I was calling for a child lost in the woods. She trembled. Her eyes jumped at every strange sound. Urine ran down her leg. I comforted her, identifying the strange new sounds, telling her how happy we were that she was here, finally stroking her hair. She let me. Her back still trembled with fear. Finally, she let go of the ledge, sat down and let me set the table before her.

Each visit I sat with her. At first, she rarely watched what she was painting but eagerly watched people talk, smiled when people laughed and took in all that was happening around her. She was learning to be at ease in Creative Growth.

The first breakthrough came when she hung up her coat. Then one Friday she picked out paints from a table nearby her own special table. Slowly, gradually, she became interested in paint and painting. She actively chose between paints placed before her. She chose bright colors. One day I coaxed her to a back table where she painted among the other clients. Since then, she continues. Another day, she toileted herself unattended. Recently, she used collage materials with paints.

Now, she smiles much of the time and is very alert to what is happening around her. We have been urging her to make sounds by using hand puppets, one on her hand, one on mine, and together we "play". She understands and now responds to verbal clues, emitting squeals of glee as we "talk". We feel confident that she will eventually talk.

These changes have been dramatic. Much work remains to be done.

Susan Aach has a B.A. in Psychology from Carnegie-Mellon University. She is the Coordinator of the Expressive Arts Program at Western Pennsylvania School for the Blind.

ART AND THE VISUALLY HANDICAPPED CHILD

Susan Aach

As a specialist in Expressive Arts, I work with forty children between the ages of four and eleven, in both individual and group sessions. The children with whom I work are either blind or partially sighted and many possess concomitant disabilities like cerebral palsy, retardation or emotional handicaps. The Expressive Arts Program which began in September, 1974, provides the children with experiences in art, drama and movement, and aims to develop the children's creativity and capacity for self-expression. The need for such opportunities was described as follows in the project proposal:

"It has been observed...that these children have more than the normal amount of stress situations, and fewer means of dealing with them. Their sensory deprivation and developmental delays, complicate their ways of dealing with problems.

Both the effective and aesthetic dimensions of art experiences are emphasized in the program, to promote the children's artfulness and use of the medium as "an intermediate channel for their emotional concerns and stresses".

¹ Title I ESEA Project Narrative, P.L. 89-313, Project #48-73007-02-959, funded under the auspices of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Project is under the Supervision of Dr. Janet Klineman, Director of Early Education Programs at the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children, Pittsburgh. The program is the outgrowth of a pilot project in the arts conducted at the school by Dr. Judith Rubin, art therapist of the Pittsburgh Child Guidance Center and Dr. Klineman, during the 1969-70 school year.

² Ibid, #1

My experience has demonstrated that art does offer visually handicapped children special and important ways to learn, to understand themselves and to create. Through discussing the children's perceptual framework, their working process and the kinds of artforms they created - I will share what I have learned.

Perception and Imagery

Working with visually handicapped children begins with understanding their way of exploring and experiencing the world. From what they explore and what they experience - they build images about the world around. These images are usually different than a sighted child's because different information is drawn upon to form them. For example, whereas a sighted child tends to be more aware of the long body, wheels and yellow color of a school bus - the visually impaired child is more likely to recall the busses horn, entry steps and railing and seats.

The special ways the children have of learning about the world, they use in the artroom, too. This took me some time to get used to - because since I am able to see, their way of experiencing the world is unfamiliar. And so when a totally blind girl, Jill, showed me a wood and glue construction she was working on, I had to ask her to explain it.

"Oh," she said, "this is the steps, (A) and here's the porch, (B), and here's the wall you go along-it's part of the hall, (C), and back here's the kitchen where my mom waits for me when I come home from school.(D)"

In addition to encouraging children to portray the world as they experience it - the adult can enrich that experience. For example, letting a child examine specimens of birds (on loan from the National History Museum) will give her more information to work with when she models her own out of clay. One little girl commented:

"Look, the mommy has a very sharp beak. The mommy is very tall, and the baby is very teeny. The baby doesn't have a hard point of the beak yet - it must have to grow."

The adult can also help a child elaborate his ideas. Showing children how sculptors build their pieces very high or rough as well as smooth and small - stimulates children to think about a material and their use of it - in new ways.

The Working Process

To make it possible for the visually impaired child to become familiar with art supplies and tools and work on their ideas with the greatest independence, a responsive space is essential. I have noted that letting children find and choose materials and tools themselves and have a choice between individual and group work spaces, increases the fluency and autonomy of their involvement.

A responsive space is important - so too are responsive materials. Sometimes when they're in art, totally blind children want to try more visual materials - that aren't always so real for them. Yet, it is only natural that children who have difficulty or are unable to see - wonder what seeing is like. In trying these materials a little of the wondering gets cleared up, and the child can act like the materials are real for him - maybe even telling someone he wishes they were.

Still, the child needn't only act like art is real for him. IT CAN BE. Clay, wood, tiles and papier mache, are just some of the materials which provide pleasure for both the partially sighted and the totally blind child. Adapting other media, like paint, the adult can make them equally satisfying. For example, adding a scent like vanilla to one fingerpaint color and a different smell to another - the child can really have a sense of combining two different substances.

Even given a work space and responsive supplies, it takes some kids time to feel good about using art supplies. Some children cannot comfortably tolerate media. Therefore, though they are not usually included as art activities, I offer kids experiences like waterplay, or baking, during art class. Because

sometimes a child is more willing to get his hands into water than paint - or into bread dough than clay. When a child makes the step of trying out the sticky dough or the runny water, it can be a start for feeling good about putting his hands into other materials.

Forms

Usually, when asked about the "form" of a piece of artwork, adults think in terms of something that has shape and boundaries. However, I have found that kids, particularly those who are visually handicapped, have different ways of using materials. Sometimes the artwork is formless. The children just squish, stretch and swirl their hands in fingerpaint. Or they may experiment with a water and cornstarch to stiffen it. Simple exploratory involvement with materials, is a rich learning experience for children.

Sometimes the children's artwork is formfull. Debbie, a congenitally blind girl, worked her clay with a knife and a rolling pin, to texture a piece she called "The Ridges and the Smooth". Another girl, Donna, used styrofoam and a pointed stick to "draw" a picture of a witch. She traced her fingers over the marks as she explained:

"This is a little ditch. Its for like in case she falls or sompin. And then she would get hurt or sompin maybe. And we don't want her to get hurt. And that ditch kinds like keeps her up, so she won't even fall."

Donna pointed out to me what parts of her picture were the "ditches" and which part was "the witch". In addition to drawing a head, neck, arms and legs for the witch - it was very important to Donna to make her lungs and cheeks. The styrofoam picture didn't look like a witch to me - but to Donna, its composition and meaning were very clear. Additionally, Donna was able to deal with some "scary" feelings she has through art. The worry about moving in space (e.g., the witch) and the wish to be protected from injury (e.g., the ditches) are concerns for many visually impaired children. Through the art experience, Donna is able to express these concerns and acknowledge, clarify and cope with them.

Summary

Experiences of the arts program revealed the children have creative spirits which can find fulfillment in art. They show great pleasure in the use of materials and have ideas they wish to give form to. Three elements were identified as fundamentals of the program approach. They are - understanding the visually handicapped child's frame of reference, being aware of his specific learning needs and offering support, and encouragement for each child's unique effort.

Finally, involvement in art can enhance the children's growth in other areas. Because having a good feeling about reaching out and being curious about materials and objects is extremely important for the partially sighted and the totally blind child - in learning to read braille, in acquiring mobility and self-care skills, as well as in the artsroom.

****A booklet of creative, affective and aesthetic experiences designed especially for the visually handicapped child and containing some of the ideas discussed in this paper, has been approved for publication by the American Foundation for the Blind.**

Upon request to Ms. Aach, c/o Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children, Bellefield at Bayard, Pittsburgh, PA 15213 - further information about the program (e.g., videotapes, workshops) can be obtained.

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MUSIC



Amy Zehm received a B.S. from Eastern Kentucky and a M.S. from the University of Louisville. She has been teaching in Hardin county since 1961.

Presently she is a Special Education Teacher, Educable Mentally Handicapped at the Lynnvale School in White Mills, Kentucky.

THE LEAST OF THESE

Amy Zehm

From 1959 until 1966 I was a classroom teacher with the ever-present "too" virus--too many students too slow to keep up, with too little time to do too many things and too tired to care. Since 1966, I have been teaching the educable mentally handicapped. With fewer students all working at a slower pace and more time to devote to each child and his particular need, I am seldom bothered by the "too" virus.

Since music has always played a large role in my life, I have used it extensively in my classroom. I have played the piano since before I can remember, sung in choirs, have been church organist for many years, and belong to a folk dance club. A few years ago, one of the older children in my class said, "Pam is our least one and yet she learns the songs quicker than any of us". Indeed, Pam was our "least" one, both in age and in mental ability. Yet she could learn any song quickly and retain it. Why not teach her basic skills with song? She could not even recognize colors, much less color words; she could not count or write her name; she could not put on her coat or put her shoes on the right feet.

For some time I had been using a set of Bowmar records with books for each month of the year. In one of them was a little song to the tune of "Go in and Out the Window". The words were:

"Go in and out the circle,
Go in and out the circle,
Go in and out the circle
Who'll buy my red balloon?"

I got balloons in various colors, the children blew them up, and we all got in a circle with a balloon man in the middle to go in and out the circle selling balloons, with special emphasis on letting Pam buy a certain color balloon. If she could choose the correct color, she got to keep the balloon. When we were working on red, I bought her a red hair ribbon and we made up a little song about a "pretty red ribbon for a pretty girl's hair". I brought her a red apple to eat, a red pencil to write with, and a red ball to play with. When she was so saturated with red that she could recognize it anywhere, we began with a yellow balloon, yellow hair ribbon, yellow ball, banana to eat, and so on, making up little songs and games with each color until she learned the basic six. During this time, she was learning to write her name with the different color pencils, learning to put her right shoe on her right foot by having her special color ribbon tied on her right wrist, and drawing balls, rabbits, or whatever took her fancy and coloring them the color she was learning at the moment. At one time our walls were full of purple rabbits!

All of the other children were eager to help Pam learn. They made Indian headbands and sang and played "Ten Little Indians" until she learned to count to ten. Then she learned to write to ten, and to manipulate blocks to do all of the addition and subtraction facts to ten.

Then I discovered the Hap Palmer records, "Getting to Know Myself" and "Learning Basic Skills Through Music". Using hula hoops on the floor, we walked around the circle, stood inside, outside, beside of, in front of, and behind the circle. Pam learned to hop, skip, jump, run, walk, and tip-toe in time to music. She learned to set her paper clock on the o'clocks and learned to recognize and name a square, circle, triangle, and rectangle. We do a great deal of singing, folk-dancing, and play-acting. We make puppets and put on puppet shows and dances for kindergarten and first grade rooms.

Pam will be nine years old on December 1, 1976. Two and one-half years ago she made her wants known with pointing and one-word commands. She was untrained, unkempt, and unhappy. Today she is a neat, happy, extremely verbal, well-mannered little girl. She knows all her color words by sight and has completed the first pre-primer and started the second in the old Alice and Jerry series published by Row-Peterson, (now Harper and Row). She can count and write to one hundred, do addition and subtraction problems to ten with pictures instead of concrete objects, can dress and undress herself, expresses herself in complete sentences, dances simple folk dances, and knows literally hundreds of songs by heart. I am convinced that her progress is due a great deal to the heavy dose of music and dance she has had.

This year we have another "least" one in our room whom Pam is helping as she once was helped.

Miriam Perrone is now full time Director of Camp Sunshine, an NCAH Model Site in Rockford, Illinois. The program now accommodates sixty youngsters on a year round basis. Disabilities include visual disorders, mental retardation, physical handicaps, learning disorders and multiple handicapped conditions. Camp Sunshine has retained Ms. Perrone's original philosophy with a strong focus on drama, dance and music as vital experiences in the learning process for handicapped youngsters. Staff consists of seven leaders, fourteen volunteers and two CETA artists-in-residence.

MUSIC AND ART WORK MIRACLES FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN AT THE NEW YORK STATE ARTS FESTIVAL

Miriam Perrone

I was standing in the plaza level of the Liberal Arts Building at prestigious Fordham University in New York City. An exhibition of sculpting with turkey bones was being set up at one end of the hall by nine very special artists ranging in age from 8 to 19.

A group of dancers, 11 to 13, svelte in leotards and tights, was moving toward Room 1 to begin an original ballet called "Two Worlds". Directly in front of me was a jazz ensemble called Soul Vibrations. The Soul Vibrations exploded in a rhythmic apostrophe with the drummer, guitarist and horn and bongo players all dressed in marvelously inventive costumes -- the perfect expression of "improvised soul".

As I listened to the Soul Vibrations, I heard the woman next to me chanting a strange litany. "He never cared about nothin.' He never cared about nothin.' He never..." I discovered she was Mrs. Ward, whose 16-year-old son, Aundray, was the drummer in the ensemble. Her story was punctuated by her constant proud glances toward Aundray, who seemed totally immersed in the sound of his group. "Until three years ago, when he started at Wiltwyck (a school for the trainable mentally retarded) and got into this music, that boy couldn't read a word. Seems like the minute he started caring about drums, he started caring about reading and counting...his attention at home was better -- he wasn't so hyper." Aundray Ward is now reading on a third-grade level.

This was an Arts Festival, obviously, for kids. But there was one important difference. All were physically or mentally handicapped and the exhibition was a "Very Special Arts Festival." This festival was selected by New York State to demonstrate the number of absorbing ways in which the arts intensify the handicapped child's responsiveness in learning.

In 1974, New York State, along with Washington and California, was named as official national model to demonstrate the impact of the arts on the educational achievements of handicapped students. The models were designated by the private National Committee on Arts for the Handicapped, of which Jean Kennedy Smith is a member. New York State would report on this festival so other states could copy or adapt the model festival activities. (Illinois, for example, has consistent programs in dance, drama and music for the handicapped only in Chicago and some of its suburbs and Rockford.) Out of an estimated 8 million handicapped enrolled in U.S. schools, only 1 million are exposed to arts programs despite significant research findings that music, creative drama and dance improve speech and language skills and social skills and increase self-reliance in the handicapped. The National Committee: Arts for the Handicapped hopes to double the number of handicapped students served by arts programs in the next five years.

Sona Nocera, a professor from Crane School of Music at the State University College in Potsdam, New York, talked to me about the goals of music education programs for the handicapped. "It doesn't surprise me to discover that a boy like Aundray, who couldn't read at all, is now reading on a third-grade level. Music can help children develop auditory and visual discrimination abilities, understand number concepts and master many other skills essential to the learning process.

"Handicapped children have a right to a music education. More specifically, they have a right to music education relevant to their developmental needs. There's the challenge to music educators designing and implementing music programs for the handicapped."

As I went to watch the "Two Worlds" ballet, I met Jim Sjolund, a former high school music teacher from Washington State who is now music supervisor for this state. "The more a human being can explore and express his own creativity in different situations, the more resources for coping he develops," Sjolund said. "We have never really allowed the handicapped child to exercise the free-wheeling imagination he may be endowed with.... never given him alternatives or choices. The major purpose of offering the arts to any child--particularly the handicapped--should be to involve that child in a meaningful experience."

"Two Worlds" was a dramatic demonstration of such involvement. Performed by seven educable mentally retarded students from Rochester, New York, the dance -- designed and choreographed by the students themselves -- told the story of the world of yesterday and the world of today. The music was "Wake Up, Everybody" by Alvin and the Bluenotes and it appears that the world of yesterday is highly preferable to the violence and chaos of today.

Their teacher, Sylvester Moore, underscored the impact this arts experience had on the learning process for his students. "When these kids first came to my reading class, I searched for ways to challenge them to independent thinking and self-confidence. Finally, we decided to take a story and choreograph it. It was "Mystery at the Old Shack" and within four months, reading skills were up 8 to 13 months. Using dance in the classroom is no frill. It is a basic tool for increasing attention spans, work concepts and imitative responses."

Later there was a special production in the Fordham auditorium. Vivienne Anderson, Associate Commissioner for Instructional Services in New York State and one of the driving forces behind this new national movement, welcomed the children, teachers, parents and guests to a celebration of common heritage in the arts.

The lights dimmed and "Jonah - Man Jazz" began. It was a musical interpretation of Jonah's confrontation with the ole whale, as performed by seventh- eighth- and ninth-grade special education classes from Oneida Junior High School, Schenectady, New York. Fifty handicapped students under the direction of Laurence Pivacek, music teacher, presented a disciplined, refreshing and genuinely delightful review combining dialog, music and dance.

There was an electric and impelling sense of success in the auditorium. Geraldine Fitzgerald, the actress, a member of the New York State Arts for Handicapped Committee, expressed it in words: "What is tremendously exciting to me about this movement is that the disciplines in art can have an impact on the lives of handicapped children as well as all children in helping them learn and enjoy the arts".

Eunice Kennedy Shriver leaned forward, chin resting on her hand and grinned. A child next to me from the Lavelle School for the Blind in the Bronx, put it very simply. "Isn't this grand?"

Yes it's grand, I thought. It was there all the time, and we've finally found it--the arts, a common heritage to be shared and enjoyed by all.



CREATING MAGIC

Miriam Perrone

When Miriam Perrone's first son Paul was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1958, the Perrones were advised immediately after his birth that the infant was suffering from Down's Syndrome (Mongolism), a chromosomal disorder that results in mental retardation and often some physical disabilities. Unwilling to accept the specialists recommendations that "Paul be institutionalized at once, and that you forget you had him," the couple brought their son home and started on a long odyssey to find a formula that would help their son make some meaning out of his life.

"The advice we got from the experts I now call 'the litany of lunatics'", says Miriam Perrone. "One doctor told us we were lucky because we would have an eternal child with us to keep us company in our old age. Another doctor told my husband Paul was a 'mongol idiot' and wouldn't live past the age of two."

The Perrones began their own search for ways to teach their son to survive. They wanted him to walk and talk and read and write - all seemingly impossible objectives.

Miriam Perrone had a degree in journalism from the University of Missouri and a record as a free lance art critic for the St. Louis Post Dispatch, Dance Magazine, and the Chicago Daily News, plus years of classes in dance and drama. Patrick, her husband, also with a degree in journalism, was an editor for Montsanto International Magazine and often collaborated with his wife writing and producing community theater. The young couple decided to use "the tools of their trade" to help Paul "become involved with life."

"I read four and five stories to him every night from the time he was a year old, and then acted out the stories - I took him in my arms and danced with him, sang to him, played every record we had in the house for him. The arts became a tool for us to excite and involve Paul with his environment. He began to imitate the sounds of music. He began to listen to the words of the stories and to try to move as I moved. By the time Paul was four years old he was walking, actually speaking in short sentences, and had mastered self-help skills like feeding himself, dressing himself, and toileting himself. The St. Louis psychologist who'd tested Paul when he was six and ready to be accepted in school, could not believe that a youngster who's I.Q. tested at 49 was doing so much. Hesitantly, he recommended that Paul be placed in an educable class for mentally retarded kids. He was the only Down's Syndrome child in an educable class in the entire city in 1964." Three more normal sons were born to the Perrones and in 1971, the family moved to Rockford Illinois, where Paul, now 13, was enrolled in a regular school in a special class for educable mentally retarded children.

"I knew he needed to continue with drama, music, and dance to reinforce his feeling of self-worth and importance, but there were no programs like this in the school for mentally handicapped kids. I knew the other children in his class could benefit from this type of arts program also."

Miriam Perrone then turned to recreation resources. She went to the Rockford Park District, where a dynamic newly-imported director from Chicago, Webbs Norman, was interested in innovative programming.

"I explained to Webbs that the schools were not providing arts for the handicapped and that I wanted to start an arts camp where children with all kinds of disabilities could sit in a circle and listen to stories, act them out, invent dances about them, and perhaps paint them on canvas. I told him this would open up a new world for children that had been essentially closed off from the world. I said that when we talk about quiet desperation, we were certainly describing the feelings of many

handicapped children who never get the chance to learn the relationships between doing and meaning and meaning and being, but even the most damaged child could eventually produce an expression of his own feelings through the arts." Webbs Norman convinced his board to fund a small program. Camp Sunshine started with eleven handicapped children, including Paul Perrone.

This year, while celebrating the close of their fifth season with a musical production called, "The Best of Camp Sunshine," starring sixty handicapped youngsters, Camp Sunshine was in a bigger spotlight. The National Committee, Arts for the Handicapped selected Camp Sunshine as a national model program.

This year Perrone and her staff of twelve have given workshops funded by the NCAH all over the country. Perrone explains, "We've demonstrated our strategies in conference rooms, gymnasiums, classrooms, and arts centers. We've been in Denver, Louisiana, Georgia, Virginia, Missouri, Illinois, and Washington, D.C. We've brought in deaf kids, physically handicapped children, and mentally retarded students. Students who came in withdrawn and frustrated often looking proud and pleased. Teachers who came in awkwardly and suspiciously came out enthused and anxious to know more. It's exciting."

But as Perrone looks back on the years of struggle and triumph, obscurity and national recognition, she likes best to quote her son Paul's favorite poem, written by Shel Silverstein, "Magic"

Sandra seen a leprichan,
Eddie touched a troll,
Laura danced with witches once
Charlie found some goblins gold.
Donald heard a mermaid sing,
Susie spied an elf
But all the magic I have known
I've had to make myself.

Surely everyone deserves the chance to create their own magic.

Eleanor C. Irwin, Ph.D. is Clinical Assistant Professor of Child Psychiatry, Expressive Arts Therapist, Pittsburgh Child Guidance Center, University of Pittsburgh.

THE EXPRESSIVE ARTS: A COMMUNICATION TOOL WITH A DISTURBED DEAF ADOLESCENT

Rosemarie Perla
Eleanor C. Irwin

Adolescence, with the struggle for identity, can indeed be a period of crisis. For the handicapped adolescent, the difficulties of this stage can be magnified, encompassing, as it does, the necessity of coming to terms with the "self" in many ways and on many levels. For the teenager with a handicap, the struggle for identity includes the need to face, accept and integrate the disability as part of the core self image.

Similarly, teaching adolescents can be difficult. With their sudden mood changes and pendulum-like swings from independence to dependence, the teenager's inner confusion is often mirrored in outer, erratic behavior. If the adolescent happens to have a language impairment, the difficulty is compounded since the lack of language structure impairs the growth of intrapersonal as well as interpersonal communication and interferes with ego development and the building of object relationships with others. This paper is an attempt to trace a teacher-therapist's experience with one severely disturbed deaf adolescent and of her attempts to use the arts as a bridge to establish communication with him and thus help him to achieve a firmer sense of self.

Setting up a resource room at the Home for Crippled Children (HCC) for six severely handicapped deaf adolescents posed quite a challenge. Most of the referred young adults had secondary handicaps, such as mental retardation, cerebral palsy and severe emotional problems. It was the communication therapist's task to teach basic education and social skills and provide a healthy environment necessary for the development of a positive sense of self. The latter was crucial, for all of the students had some degree of emotional impairment which colored all aspects of their daily lives, relationships with others and capacity to learn.

SAM: AN ADOLESCENT IN CRISIS

None of the adolescents in the program was quite so baffling as 18 year-old Sam, whose reaction to being separated from his parents seemed to stimulate severe regression. During the first month at HCC, he refused to bathe himself or perform other self care tasks. Sam seemed unable to relate to others and was fascinated with inanimate objects; he often laughed and talked to himself in a bizarre way.

SAM'S BACKGROUND

Sam's parents referred him to HCC because of severe regression in functioning which seemed to have been precipitated by his first real separation from them. Before the regressive episode, they claimed that Sam was a child who "did everything he was suppose to do". He adjusted well to his deafness and was a good student in the local high school in a classroom for the hearing impaired. He played basketball, handled his daily responsibilities well and worked part-time at a nearby store. As strict oralists, Sam's parents insisted that their son always use speech, not sign language. Prior to his illness, Sam's mother seemed over-invested in him, while his father seemed passive and uninvolved.

A radical change was noted in Sam's behavior following the parents' first two-week vacation without their children. At that time, Sam started withdrawing and was quite phobic, worrying, for example, about his food being poisoned. He often talked about people hiding under the floor wanting to harm the family. Alarmed, his family referred him to the deaf resource room at HCC.

INTERACTIONS WITH SAM

While in the classroom it became clear that either a way would have to be found to communicate with Sam or he would have to be referred elsewhere. One day while being questioned about some money taken from the teacher's purse, Sam suddenly struck out and hit the teacher. This sudden loss of control, taken together with his regression, was the crisis that precipitated a request for mental health consultation and resulted in the decision to actively use the arts as therapy with Sam.

An individual program of drama therapy was begun with Sam. Weekly creative drama sessions were already being held with the other members of his class in an effort to increase communication skills. It was apparent that Sam would need a great deal of extra, skilful and well-planned individual help in order to build a sense of trust and make intrapsychic changes possible.

ART WORK: ESTABLISHING A RELATIONSHIP

Since Sam often stared at the wall and refused to work, it was clear that if any intervention was to be successful, a relationship needed to be established. A beginning step was found in offering Sam an alternative to academic work. He was given a journal in which he could draw his feelings and responses; the therapist sat with him giving selected feedback. Sam seemed to enjoy this activity which provided an avenue of communication; it seemed to help bridge the inner isolation in which Sam lived.

One of the first pictures Sam drew in his journal was a figure which he said was a "cow and a bear". Sam related several bizarre fantasies about his parents as well as wolves, bears and cows; these associations seemed to be mainly primary process ideation. However disjunctive and confusing, his pictures and comments appeared to be symbolically describing his ambivalent and confusing feelings about his parents.

Along with Sam's next entry in his journal, he also told a story and talked about a "boon". Using barely intelligible speech and some sign language, Sam related the following:

"The wolf was outside my window and was watching me.
The man and his wife are in front of the car."

In his associations, Sam talked of his fondness for cars and equated driving with independence. The car was in fact often a self symbol which seemed to describe his feelings of power and freedom. It was the therapist's feeling that the story was Sam's way of talking about his parents' inability to support his individuation (i.e., the man and his wife - Sam's parents - are in front of the car, thus blocking movement and separation.)

Several weeks later Sam drew another figure, which again showed the theme of a cow. This one, however, has very pronounced udders and a small calf beside it. From his associations it became clear that this was Sam's symbolic way of talking about the nurturance he felt he was receiving from his therapist in his struggle to grow.

Two months after Sam started drawing in his journal, he drew a figure of himself and his counselor. In addition to his individual and group work in expressive arts, Sam also had weekly one hour counseling sessions with a female counselor for the deaf.* He demonstrated the importance of this relationship in a picture, showing himself and his female counselor playing a game of tennis. Although there are no physical or sexual distinctions between male and female in the drawing, Sam referred himself as "the big one" (with the bigger racket as well!). Sam had indeed made great strides in being able to draw representations of people instead of animals and in being able to talk about his relationship with his counselor in a direct, less disguised way.

* Sam met for weekly one-hour sessions with Ms. Susan Martino Lynch, M.Ed., a teacher and counselor for the deaf.

DRAMA EXPERIENCE: ARTICULATING THE CONFLICTS

From the beginning Sam took part in group creative drama sessions. At first he tended to sit back and participate only minimally. When he saw that each student's unique participation was accepted, he began entering into pantomime, such as imitating animals and having the group guess its identity. He readily acted out his impressions of a "scared rabbit" or a "mean, ugly bear" behind "bars" groping for something to eat.

Once a workable relationship was established, it was possible for Sam to participate in individual drama therapy. In these one hour/weekly sessions, Sam used a doll house, miniature people and puppets as expressive media. In one session, he related the following story:

"The bad father comes home and turns all the furniture upside down. Mother says Dad is crazy. Mother angry."

After this story, Sam, with much intensity of feeling, got the father doll and hanged him from the roof of the doll house.

The therapist articulated "the boy's" anger for Sam, thereby giving him the words as well as the emotional permission necessary for the expression of such feelings.

Sam, who had not yet achieved a healthy separation from his parents, had difficulty taking roles. He usually asked the therapist to play the mother or father in his dramas. Once they played out a scene where the therapist was a mother cooking in the kitchen and Sam was a boy coming home from school. Sam pantomimed having an imaginary gun in his hand and "shot" at "the mother". As though frightened, he laughed to reassure himself and said he was "fooling". In these and other situations, Sam repeatedly demonstrated the ambivalent love/hate he felt toward his parents.

Although verbally unable to articulate his conflicts, Sam was able to symbolically express them in his sessions and in many ways demonstrated them in his behavior with his therapist. There was growing evidence of more effective communication as Sam was helped to sort out and label his feelings, thus making it possible to achieve a sense of differentiation between himself and others, especially his parents.

CHANGES OVER TIME

Over a year's period of time, Sam gradually changed. He began to relate to others, teasing them, asking questions and going with them on short walks. Although most of his time was spent alone, he began to feel accepted and was able to socialize with others. In school, Sam was better able to attend to specific academic tasks and offered his feedback in class projects. His speech improved and he used manual communication more often to talk with his deaf peers. His body movements lost their rigid, robot-like quality as he joined in movement games more freely. His parents reported that on weekends he started to join in family activities again and often would go on errands, visits and bike rides.

This experience with Sam, though difficult, demonstrated that expressive arts activities can provide opportunities for greater feelings of mastery and control for troubled youngsters. In providing opportunities for communication, catharsis and the working through of conflicts, art and drama activities can be a powerful therapeutic tool, particularly with the low language deaf adolescent who may be locked in a world with limited expressive outlets. As was the case with Sam, supervision from a well trained drama therapist or another mental health professional may be necessary in order to decode the many meanings of the disguised messages, understand the nature of the transference and plan a careful program of intervention.

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